

Common Core for Media Specialists: Considerations



I had a really great conversation with a colleague yesterday discussing what the role of the Media Specialist was in the wake of the Common Core rollout. She was concerned that she might be peripheral to the changes and she really wanted to know more about what was going on.

I assured her that she was not peripheral in the least.

“In fact,” I told her, “you are the cornerstone.” She was a little taken aback, but I explained.

I told her that every teacher was now a teacher of literacy, that there were reading and writing components explicit in everyone’s practice now, that there were instructional shifts toward informational text, deep reading and analysis, building domain specific vocabulary, and rigorous researching skills. I told her that she had never been more important than she was right at this moment.

I saw her look of fear when she said, “So what does this mean for me, then?”

I let her know that she could relax. What is coming for all teachers is on par with what she’s been doing for years:

- helping others find appropriate resources both print and non-print
- helping others evaluate resources for their usefulness
- helping others use media in any form to support content knowledge
- helping others explore the portals to the universe through the use of the media center

I shared with her [Page 7 of the ELA Common Core Document](#), that describes seven capacities

that the College and Career student should demonstrate. In her role as media specialist, these seven capacities, by and large, were already a part of her framework for teaching.

I showed her a [resource I just recently came across on LiveBinders](#) that included a slew of information about the Common Core Standards in relation to Media Specialists.

We also discussed some of the steps that she could begin considering as she helped teachers in their own transitions to Common Core Integration, including:

- helping students identify those topics in literary texts that would also be found in informational texts
- provide more opportunities for print texts that are informational: books, newspapers, magazines, reference materials
- developing plans for helping students find relevant and useful information online as well as engage students in specific methods (web tools and digital device apps - like [EasyBib](#) or [Son of Citation Machine](#)) for creating citations
- creating opportunities for students and teachers to engage with text in multiple ways: print, web, web 2.0 tools, interlibrary loans, etc.
- creating a web resource for digital writing and reading in the content areas in several ways, perhaps on a school website, on LiveBinders, on a wiki, etc.

We discussed what reporting features she might have access to since her card catalog system was all online, for inventory and for checkout. While she wasn't sure in the conversational moment, we wondered out loud about the possibility of providing reports for each student that showed the balance between the literary and the informational texts that the student had checked out in the last year.

We talked about how other teachers were going to be responsible for collecting evidence of student learning on a more frequent and formative basis, and this is something she could do to. If she knew that a student was always choosing literary/fictional texts, she could more easily make suggestions in the same interest area but around informational texts. She could also target reading levels and make suggestions for more rigorous reading if students were not self-selecting books that at least represented an independent (and possibly easing them into a challenging) zone.

The last thing we discussed was "Mapping Out Her Plan." Those of you who know me or read me regularly know that while I engage in a lot of tech talk, it's always rooted in a curricular focus. I told her to, in general, document her plans:

- What actions would she take to upgrade her own practice in terms of the growth associated with Common Core integration?
- What were those specific tasks she wanted to be sure and engage in with both students and teachers?
- And finally, what evidence would she gather that represented the fulfillment of both the tasks and the actions?

As we wrapped up our conversation, her mood had decidedly changed from worried to excitement. She couldn't get away from me fast enough and begin planning.

I'm sharing this conversation with you for two reasons. One, I haven't seen a lot of press around what educational professionals outside of the core subjects should be considering with the Common Core implementation, and two, sometimes all it takes to ease the worries of coming changes is just a conversation and brainstorming session.

I think for most teachers, the capacity is there; the willingness is there. We just have to articulate ideas into manageable steps and then GO!

*Also--good luck to my media specialist colleague as she embarks on her new school year. After our conversation, I'm as excited as she is!

